



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Montgomery Organizational Reform Commission to Hold Public Forum

**On Wednesday, Oct. 20, Residents Can Offer Suggestions
On Consolidating / Reorganizing County Government**

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ROCKVILLE, Md., September 23, 2010—The Montgomery County Organizational Reform Commission, which was appointed by the Montgomery County Council and the County Executive, on Wednesday, Oct. 20, will ask the public for its opinions on restructuring the current organization of County Government and County-funded agencies.

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The eight-member commission, which was named in July, was created at the urging of Councilmember Roger Berliner and County Executive Isiah Leggett. It is composed of County residents who are experienced in government, business and non-profit service delivery. The volunteer commission, which is scheduled to provide recommendations to the Council and the Executive by Jan. 31, has been gathering information in its initial phase in order to provide the County Council with a status report by Sept. 30.

The commission will ask residents to help fulfill its mission by holding a public forum at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 20, in the Third Floor Hearing Room of Council Office Building at 100 Maryland Ave. in Rockville. Residents can sign up in advance to speak by calling 240-777-7814 or 240-777-7938. If time allows, speakers who do not sign up in advance will also be able to offer suggestions. The committee said that items in writing will be most helpful.

Since starting its work, the commission has been soliciting ideas and suggestions for potential reorganization or consolidation from elected officials; residents; business and community leaders; County and agency employees; bargaining unit representatives; and other stakeholders.

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The commission will draft and adopt written criteria to evaluate which suggestions merit further consideration by the commission. The criteria must include a minimum level of potential cost savings; a standard for ease of implementation; and a measure of acceptable service level impact.

The Council appointees to the commission are Scott Fosler of Chevy Chase, who has served as president of the National Academy of Public Administration; Daniel Hoffman of Rockville, who for the past nine years has experience managing organization transformation and process analysis efforts as a senior associate for PricewaterhouseCoopers' Washington Federal Practice; Vernon H. Ricks, Jr., of Potomac, a former Takoma Park City Councilmember who has served on the boards of directors of Maryland Municipal League and the National League of Cities; and Len Simon of Bethesda, the president of the Edgemoor Citizens Association and an employee of the Washington-based firm Simon and Company that works with local governments.

County Executive Leggett's appointees to the commission are M. Christina Echavarren of Bethesda, an executive with a non-profit organization who is experienced in modernizing budget and accounting processes; Joan Fidler of Bethesda, the president of the Montgomery County Taxpayers League; Susan Heltemes of Silver Spring, who has led and managed teams for nationally recognized research firm Westat; and Richard Wegman of Bethesda, the former chief counsel and staff director of the U.S. Senate's Committee on Governmental Affairs.

"We have already heard from many people who are familiar with various aspects inside the government," said Mr. Ricks, who along with Mr. Wegmen was named a co-chair of the commission. "Now is the opportunity for other residents in Montgomery County to contribute their constructive ideas."

The commission must submit by Sept. 30 a status/progress report to the Council and the Executive outlining its progress to date and its future work plan. The commission must submit its final report to the Executive and Council no later than Jan 31.

"We realize that we are considering initiatives that some might find difficult to accept," said Mr. Wegmen. "But these are challenging times for Montgomery County government and County-funded agencies. This forum will be an opportunity for residents to suggest what could be consolidated, reduced or even eliminated to reorganize the government."

The final report must contain the commission's recommendations to reorganize or consolidate functions performed by County government or County-funded agencies. For each recommendation for reorganization or consolidation, the commission's report must include the rationale and estimated cost savings associated with implementing the recommendation. Any organizational proposal for County government in the commission report must take the form of a reorganization plan that the Executive could submit to the Council under Charter §217.